DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 802 HE 006 856

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TITLE AASCU: The First Ten Years. A Brief History of the First Decade of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.
INSTITUTION American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C. Office of Information and Research.
PUB DATE 6 Nov 70
NOTE 7p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Higher Education; Historical Reviews; National Organizations; *Organizational Development; Organizational Effectiveness; *Organizations (Groups); Professional Associations; *State Colleges; *State Universities; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *AASCU

ABSTRACT

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) is an outgrowth of the Association of Teacher Education Institutions and the American Association of Teachers Colleges. The major purposes of the new organization founded in 1961 were: (1) to enable the members to make their influence felt in connection with national affairs; (2) to present the strengths and services of state colleges and universities effectively to the public and to agencies and individuals from which grants of funds might be available; (3) to represent the members of the Association in the National Commission on Accrediting; and (4) to conduct studies of educational problems of common interest to the members. As evidence of the strong and influential national position of the organization, the report cites the major endeavors of the Association. (JMF)

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A brief history of the first decade of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, written by Dr. Walter E. Hager, its first executive secretary.

Published by:

Office of Information and Research
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
Suite 700, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036

November 6, 1970

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Walter E. Hager

AASCU: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

AASCU: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

Walter E. Hager

The Association of State Colleges and Universities (now the American Association of State Colleges and Universities) was established February 23, 1961. It grew out of the Association of Teacher Education Institutions which had been organized in 1951. Some of the characteristics and inspiration of the Association can be traced to the American Association of Teachers Colleges, which had a history dating back to 1918.

Nearly all of the members of ASCU began as single purpose institutions, most of them as normal schools. A few were founded in recent years as general service colleges or universities. By 1950, all of the normal schools had become teachers colleges, and many of them were state colleges or universities.

Prior to 1950, the activities and concerns of the teachers colleges were confined largely to their respective states, and the interests of many of them did not extend much beyond limited regions within their states.

In the years following World War II, with the vastly increasing numbers of young people seeking a college education, these colleges became the fastest growing degree-granting institutions in the nation. Largely owing to the pressures from their service areas, nearly all of them became multi-purpose colleges or universities with authorization to confer graduate as well as baccalaureate degrees. They were obviously destined to carry the major burden of a thrust toward universal opportunity for higher education. Their programs and services were greatly expanded, their horizons greatly extended.

Early in this period of expansion, these institutions encountered a vast array of difficulties in obtaining recognition and financial support. It became apparent that all their problems relating to rapidly increasing enrollments and expanding curricula could be resolved best if they joined forces with other types of state colleges and universities and with similar institutions in other parts of the country. An association with a membership broader than that of ATEI and with much better financing was obviously needed for this purpose. Furthermore, the growing impact of the Federal government in connection with higher education, especially from Federal research grants and other grants-in-aid, made it imperative that there be a strong national agency to represent the interests of these state colleges and universities. For a number of years all other segments of higher education had benefited from such an organization. It was clear that the state colleges and universities also needed the assistance and services of a strong national association.

At the Annual Meeting of ATEI on February 11, 1960, a committee was appointed to make a study of the Association and to bring in a recommendation regarding the desirability of reorganizing it with a broader membership and expanded functions. The outcome was the transformation of ATEI into the Association of State Colleges and Universities a year later -- on February 23, 1961. This name was changed to American Association of State Colleges and Universities at the 1967 Annual Meeting.

During the year of planning, the ATEI's last president -- the late President Thomas R. Miller of Edinboro State College in Pennsylvania -- was especially active. He was chairman of the constitution committee, and did much to arrange for a smooth transition to the new Association.

The officers elected for the first year of the Association of State Colleges and Universities were:

President: Lloyd P. Young, Keene Teachers College, New Hampshire
President-Elect: John R. Emens, Ball State Teachers College, Indiana
Secretary-Treasurer: C.R. Sattgast, Bemidji State College, Minnesota

The first Board of Directors consisted of the officers and these four elected members:

1961-62: George F. Budd, St. Cloud State College, Minnesota
1961-63: J. Lawrence Walkup, Arizona State College, Arizona
G. Tyler Miller, Madison College, Virginia
1961-64: Royal F. Netzer, State University College at Oneonta, New York

Much resulted from the devotion with which the secretary-treasurer, the late President Charles R. Sattgast, worked during the year 1961-62 to recruit members for the new Association. By the time of its first Annual Meeting, February 14-15, 1962, there were 160 state colleges and universities in its membership. Among these there were 22 institutions which had not been members of ATEI.

On July 1, 1962, the Association opened its national office in the building of the American Council on Education, Washington, D.C., with an executive secretary on a half-time basis and a full-time secretarial assistant. The executive secretary was Walter E. Hager, previously president of the District of Columbia Teachers College.

The purposes of the new Association were:

: To enable the members to make their influence felt in connection with national affairs. With their greatly increased enrollments and expanded curricula, the presidents of the state colleges and universities were conscious of the growing significance of these institutions in the national scene. The officers of the Association were admonished from the outset that the members wanted it to be heard in national activities affecting higher education -- as a voice, and not merely an echo.

: To present the strengths and services of state colleges and universities effectively to the public and to agencies and individuals from which grants of funds might be available. Throughout most of their history, the state colleges and universities had done little to publicize the importance and the effectiveness of their programs. Many of them had not considered it necessary. Now the situation had changed. The presidents and faculties of the state colleges and universities were confident that the new Association could help demonstrate to all agencies -- both private and governmental -- that when grants of funds were being made, these institutions merited favorable consideration.

: To represent the members of the Association in the National Commission on Accrediting. When that Commission was activated, the state teachers colleges were the only institutions of higher education not represented in it. The gap was filled when ATEI was organized and made a constituent member. The Commission readily accepted ASCU as a replacement of ATEI.

: To conduct studies of educational problems of common interest to the members. Immediately upon establishing the new Association, its members voted to help finance the activities and services of what was then called the Joint Office of Institutional Research which had been established by the Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the State Universities Association. These two Associations were later merged and the Joint Office became the Office of Institutional Research of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. The reports and publications from this Office proved to be of considerable value. However, the members of ASCU foresaw it would be desirable for them collectively, through their new Association, to conduct studies tailored to their own particular needs and the Association's Office of Information and Research was created.

The location of the Washington office of AASCU in the building of the American Council on Education was a fortunate arrangement. It enabled the Association to maintain close contact with other organizations serving higher education, including the American Council on Education itself. The Association became a constituent member of the American Council at once.

Most important of all, the Association obtained offices immediately adjacent to the Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and to the State Universities Association. It was soon apparent that many of the problems and purposes of both of these Associations were virtually identical with those of AASCU. From the beginning the three Associations worked in the closest harmony, especially in matters pertaining to legislation. Arrangements were made to distribute the Circular Letter of the Land-Grant Association among the members of AASCU. It proved invaluable in keeping presidents of member institutions informed about Federal legislation and all governmental activities affecting higher education. After the merger of the Land-Grant Association and the State Universities Association, AASCU continued to work closely with the resulting National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. Important among their cooperative endeavors is a joint statement on legislation issued annually. On alternate years, the two Associations held their Annual Meetings concurrently in Washington, D.C.

There is ample evidence that in ten short years the strong and influential national organization of state colleges and universities envisioned by the founders has been established. From a small beginning with a half-time executive secretary and his assistant, the activities and services of the Association have expanded until in 1970 there is a staff of 22. At the end of the first year there were 160 members; in its tenth year the membership numbers 274. One two occasions the members have shown their enthusiasm for what the Association is accomplishing by voting to increase the dues.

The endeavors of the Association have become many and varied. Chief among them are:

: An Annual Meeting to maintain a flow of ideas and information, to elect officers, and to conduct specified elements of Association business.

: A biennial Summer Council of Presidents to enable presidents of member institutions to discuss common problems and exchange ideas.

: A regular newsletter, the Memo, which gives presidents information related specifically to their needs and interests.

: A continuing public information program to increase public support and understanding of the expanding role and responsibilities of the state colleges and universities.

: National and regional workshops to help member institutions deal with specific problems and develop new programs.

: Presentation of information and formal testimony to Congressional committees considering legislation which affects state colleges and universities.

: Provisions for representing the interests of member institutions with Federal departments and agencies, other higher education organizations, and groups outside the field of higher education.

: On a fee basis, providing members with detailed information about Federal programs, and assisting faculties and staffs in seeking outside program support.

: A consultant service, also on a fee basis, for member institutions and new state colleges with administrative and academic problems.

: A program of workshops and counseling service on a fee basis to help member institutions establish and strengthen development programs.

: Developing opportunities for state colleges and universities in international education, including opening international study centers in Mexico and Canada.

: Developing Association-wide programs in urban affairs, allied health and the environment.

: Publication and distribution of newsletters; Proceedings of the Annual Meetings; studies on college costs and enrollments; on curriculum, and degree programs; on urban, ethnic and community activities; on current issues such as ROTC, alumni work, guides to institutional governance, and legal problems on the campus.

Almost all of the rapidly developing state colleges and universities are now members of AASCU. A few years ago some of them didn't exist. Today, they offer a broad range of programs leading to bachelor's degrees in all of the institutions, to master's degrees in most of them, and to doctor's degrees in some. Together, these institutions now enroll more than one of every five students in institutions of higher education. This ratio is changing. Within a few years, one of every four students will attend a state college or university. And in a comparatively short time it may be one of three.

The AASCU has risen to the challenge of helping these institutions secure the support and recognition they merit, and to build the kinds of programs that can be most valuable for vast numbers of young people in modern American society. Many observers declare that the Association has exceeded the expectations and hopes of its founders. But the officers and members believe it has not yet attained its ultimate potential. They strive constantly to increase its effectiveness. The genius of the organization is that it draws upon the imagination and creativity of all its members. They join together to help each other. And they are not bound or restricted too much by tradition. New and exciting proposals are presented and considered each year. There is every reason to believe that the vitality of AASCU will continue to stimulate and inspire the presidents and faculties of its member institutions, and that state colleges and universities collectively are destined to be a powerful influence in higher education in this land.

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Presidents of AASCU

1961 President Lloyd P. Young
Keene Teachers College (N.H.)

1962 President John R. Emens
Ball State Teachers College (Ind.)

1963 President Eugene B. Elliott
Eastern Michigan University

1964 President Glenn S. Kendall
Chico State College (Calif.)

1965 President William H. Plemmons
Appalachian State Teachers Col.(N.C.)

1966 President Earle T. Hawkins
Towson State College (Md.)

1967 President James P. Cornette
West Texas State University

1968 President G. Tyler Miller
Madison College (Va.)

1969 President George F. Budd
Kansas State College of Pittsburg

1970 President Hilton C. Buley
Southern Connecticut State College

Executive Officers of AASCU

1961-62
Secretary-Treasurer:
President Charles R. Sattgast
Bemidji State College (Minn.)

1962-65
Executive Secretary
Walter E. Hager
Former President, D.C. Teachers Col.

1965 (Summer)
Acting Executive Secretary
Joe Smith
Chairman, Division of Education and Psychology
Chico State College (Calif.)

1965 --
Executive Director
Allan W. Ostar
Former Director, Office of Institutional Research (Wash.,D.C.)